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Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----------000059 291243Z /20
O 291150Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY RABAT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3502

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 5950

EXDIS

EO 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: MASS
SUBJECT: KING HASSAN'S CONCERN OVER AMMUNITION FOR U.S.
SUPPLIED TANKS

1. KING HASSAN SUMMONED ME TO ROYAL RETREAT AT BOUZNIKA ON OCTOBER 27, ALONG WITH FONMIN BOUCETTA, TO EXPRESS HIS SERIOUS CONCERN OVER U.S. FAILURE TO DELIVER AMMUNITION FOR 54 U.S.-SUPPLIED M-48A5 TANKS. ROYAL COUNSELOR DRISS SLAOUI WAS ALSO PRESENT.

2. KING BEGAN BY RECALLING STORY HE HAD HEARD FROM NASSER, SINCE CONFIRMED BY SADAT, THAT EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION HAD BEEN DECIDED IN FINAL ANALYSIS BECAUSE OF KING FAROUK'S MISMANAGEMENT OF THE EGYPTIAN ARMED FORCES, WITH CORRUPTION AND LACK OF SERVICEABLE EQUIPMENT HAVING LED TO INEFFECTIVENESS AGAINST BRITISH AND ISRAELIS.

3. KING SAID HE DID NOT WISH TO DRAW EXACT PARALLEL, BUT REQUESTED BOUCETTA TO READ ALOUD SEPTEMBER 23 LETTER FROM MUSLO TO SECRETARY GENERAL OF DEFENSE COLONEL ACHAHBAR. LETTER EXPLAINED THAT DELIVERIES OF TWO TYPES OF 105MM TANK KILLING ROUNDS FOR THE M48A5 (ORDERED BY MOROCCO) HAD BEEN SUSPENDED BECAUSE OF MALFUNCTIONAING OF THE FUSE (HEAT) AND PREMATURE
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DETONATION IN THE CANNON (HEP). LETTER ALSO NOTED THAT EVERYTHING POSSIBLE WAS BEING DONE TO DELIVER ALTERNATE CARTRIDGES. THE KING SAID THAT THE M48A5 TANKS HAD NOW ARRIVED, BUT THAT NO AMMUNITION WAS AVAILABLE.

4. SPECIFYING HE DID NOT WISH TO SPEAK TO ME IN HIS

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USUAL INFORMAL MANNER BUT FORMALLY
TO THE AMBASSADOR OF THE UNITED STATES, HE DESCRIBED
THIS SITUATION AS "SCANDALOUS." HE EXPRESSED
SATISFACTION WITHE M-48A5 TANK, RECALLING LONG
DISCUSSIONS BEFORE ITS ACQUISITION AND THE ROLE OF
GENERAL PATTON'S SON (A MAJOR GENERAL WHO HAD VISITED
MOROCCO IN 1974) IN CONVINCING THE KING OF THEIR
QUALITY. MOROCCO HAD THEREFORE PURCHASED 54 TANKS,
ALL OF WHICH WERE CURRENTLY STATIONED IN ERRACHIDIA.
THEIR PURPOSE WAS SOLELY DEFENSIVE, BUT AS THEY HAD
NO AMMUNITION WHATSOEVER, HOW COULD THEY DEFEND THE
MOROCCAN POPULATION, KING ASKED RHETORICALLY.
(IN FACT, THE 54 TANKS AT ERRACHIDIA ARE M-48A3'S WITH
90 MM CANNONS AND HAVE AMMUNITION. THE 54 REFERRED TO
BY KING ARE ON THEIR WAY TO OUJDA IN THE NORTH AND HAVE
NO HEAT AND HEP AMMUNITION.) HE STRESSED THE GOM HAD
PAID CASH NOT ONLY FOR THE TANKS, BUT ALSO FOR THE AMMU-
NITION WHICH USG HAD FAILED TO PROVIDE.

5. KING STATED THAT THIS SITUATION RASIED "1000 QUESTIONS"
IN MOROCCAN MINDS REGARDING U.S. POLICY. HE WONDERED
IF BELGIUM, FRANCE AND OTHER NATO COUNTRIES, WHO HAD THE
SAME TANKS, HAD BEEN CUT OFF BY THE U.S. AS MOROCCO HAD
BEEN, EVEN THOUGH SOME WER MANUFACTURING THEIR OWN
AMMUNITION. MOROCCO HAD ALREADY BEEN IN CONTACT WITH
CERTAIN COUNTRIES WITH A VIEW TO PURCHASING TANK AMMUNITION
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FROM THEM, AHD RECEIVED POSITIVE REPLIES, AND WOULD NOW
PROCEED WITH PURCHASES. KING ALSO NOTED THAT ISRAELIS
APPARENTLY HAVING NO PROBLEMS WITH AMMUNITION FOR
THEIR M-48 TANKS. SUDDENLY, HOWEVER, GOM HAD BEEN INFORMED
BY MUSLO LETTER THAT THERE WAS NO 105 MM HEAT AND HEP
AMMUNITION FOR MOROCCAN TANKS. THIS MADE MANY MOROCCANS
WONDER WHETHER THERE HAD BEEN A POLICY SHIFT WITH RESPECT
TO MOROCCO. HE FOUND SITUATION MOST UNFORTUNATE AND COULD
NOT UNDERSTAND IT.

6. I RESPONDED THAT I HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY SEEN THE
SEPTEMBER 23 LETTER AND WOULD LOOK IMMEDIATELY INTO THE
MATTER. I NOTED THAT GENERAL PARTAIN, DURING
SEPTEMBER 22-24 VISIT TO MOROCCO, HAD BECOME AWARE
OF PROBLEM OF AMMUNITION FOR THE TANSK, AND HAD SENT
A MESSAGE TO WASHINGTON TO OBTAIN ACCELERATED DELIVERY.
WE HAD SUBSEQUENTLY BEEN ABLE TO DIVERT 500 ROUNDS OF
TANK KILLING AMMUNITION. (KING HAD MISTAKEN IMPRESSION
THESE WERE ONLY TRAINING ROUNDS WHEN IN FACT AN ADDITIONAL
270 TRAINING ROUNDS HAD ALSO BEEN DIVERTED.) I PROMISED
TO CALL FONMIN BOUCETTA AS SOON AS I HAD DETAILS TO CON-
VEY. KING'S PARTING WORDS WERE, "I WANT MY SHELLS."

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7. AFTER CONSULTING WASHINGTON, I REPORTED LATER SAME
DAY TO FOREING MINISTER BOUCETTA THAT THE SUSPENSION OF
DELIVERIES OF SHELLS (HEAT AND HEP) APPLIED EQUALLY
TO ALL COUNTRIES WHICH HAD THIS AMMUNITION ON ORDER. IN
ADDITION, I EXPLAINED THAT BECAUSE OF POSSIBLE MALFUNCTION
THIS AMMUNITION WAS NOT TO BE FIRED BY U.S. FORCES
EXCEPT IN EMERGENCY, ADDING THAT THE 500 APDS ROUNDS WERE
BEING DIVERTED FROM PRODUCTION DESTINED FOR U.S. FORCES.
BOUCETTA COMMENTED THAT THIS INFORMATION HELPFUL AND
CLEARLY PUT THIS MATTER IN A NON-POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE.

8. ON OCTOBER 28 I BRIEFED ROYAL COUNSELOR DRISS SLAOUI
IN SIMILAR VEIN. HE SHARED BOUCETTA'S VIEWS ON NON-
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POLITICAL NATURE OF WHAT WAS ESSENTIALLY A TECHNICAL QUESTION AND
SAID, IN ABSENCE OF BOUCETTA, WHO HAD LEFT FOR UNGA, THAT HE
WOULD REPORT IMMEDIATELY MY CONVERSATION TO KING.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STEPS TO RESOLVE
THIS PROBLEM BEING SUBMITTED SEPTEL.

10. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO PASS THIS MESSAGE TO DOD
FOR ISA AND DSAA AND TO USCINCEUR FOR MAJOR GENERAL
PARTAIN.
ANDERSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
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Sent Date: 29-Oct-1977 12:00:00 am
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Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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